THE JEWS & GENTILES:

A LECTURE

BY

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DELIVERED IN CAPE TOWN, SUNDAY, AUGUST 7TH,
AND IN MELBOURNE, DECEMBER, 1881.

PRICE—SIXPENCE.

MELBOURNE:

PRINTED BY J. WING, 33 WELLINGTON STREET, COLLINGWOOD.

1882.

LECTURE.

The Christians have ever hated the Jews because the Jews persist in adhering to the religion of their sires. Indispensable though it be, according to certain interpretations of prophesy, that the Jews should remain impervious to Christianity, they have been most thoroughly hated and detested for doing what they could in no wise help, if all be as we are told! Christians say that they have fulfilled the prophesies, and the Christians, therefore, have burned them for doing it!

How the Christians can hate the Jews as a nation is a mystery! The sacred books of the children of Israel are the sacred books of Christendom, and the first parents of the Jews were the first parents of the whole human race,—that is to say, if we argue from the Orthodox stand-point. Adam was a Jew, and Eve a Jewess, and the peopling of the Earth was commenced by these two. Hence, "all people that on Earth do dwell" are descendents of Jews! To hate them, therefore, is to hate our own ancestors, and to despise our descent from Paradise.

Not only were the first parents of the human race of Jewish mould and blood, but the founder of Christianity himself was a Jew. He was from the house of David (according to the interpretations given by

Orthodox divines of the contradictory genealogies of Mathew and Luke), both on his father's and on his mother's side. His mother was "purified," after his birth, "according to the law of Moses." When he was eight days old he was circumcised after the custom of the Jews. The usual offering was made unto the Lord in his case as strictly as in all others. As he grew up he told his people that he "came not to destroy the law" of Moses; and when a certain man came to ask him what he should do to inherit eternal life, he replied, not by instancing any of the dogmas or doctrines of the Christian Churches, but by telling him to keep the commandments of Moses. He came to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." His first followers were Jews. All his miracles were wrought in the country of the Jews, and his life, from infancy to death, was passed among them. He preached to them, he healed their sick, he fed their hungry, and he raised their dead. They were the witnesses of the wonders that occurred at his birth; they were present at his cruel death, and they stood in solemn silence to watch him ascend to Heaven. Of Jews, with Jews, and for Jews, then, was the founder of Christianity. To hate the Jews, therefore, is to hate Jesus of Nazareth, and nothing can be more inconsistent in a Christian than such infidelity to his master.

After his death, though Peter and Paul had abated some of their reverence for the Jewish customs, still they had their particular views so decided upon them, that at Antioch they came to words, and had a disgraceful quarrel upon the subject. It seems Peter

among the Gentiles had been eating some forbidden meats, but, as soon as he suspected that he was among Jews, he repaired to the limited bill of fare prescribed by the Jewish code. Paul was naturally incensed at this dissimulation, and, thinking he had sufficient cause, he withstood Peter "to the face, because he was to be blamed." This shows that Peter had more respect for the Jews than for the Gentiles. As to Paul, though he called himself the "Apostle of the uncircumcision," he was a Jew to the Jews, and he himself circumcised the disciple Timothy.

If these things are borne in mind, it will be seen how foolish it is for a Christian to detest a Jew. The Jews gave us the Old Testament, and, according to the authorities of Orthodoxy, they also gave us the New. The first man to sin in this world was a Jew, and he who saved us from it was also a Jew. It was Jewish prophesy that foretold Christianity, and it was Jewish miracles that fulfilled it. Therefore, we are indebted to the Jews for the whole scheme of our salvation, and without them the Religion of Christianity would have been impossible. But there is more. God himself regarded the Jews as His "peculiar people." They were especially His children, and the Psalmist (inspired, of course) exclaims to them, "Oh ye seed of Abraham His servant, ye children of Jacob His chosen!" Is it not, therefore, presumptuous to set aside a divine choice, and to detest those whom God himself has chosen?

The Christian answer to these facts will doubtless be, that the Jewish religion was good for the time it was intended to exist, but that it was decreed by

the wisdom of Providence that it should be superseded by a nobler and purer religion, which should be based upon the example of Christ, and not upon the laws of Moses. Hence it is not the Jews, but their imperfect and heathenish religion that is detested.

The Jew replies to this by saying that his religion was founded by God himself, and the laws which he still reveres were revealed by the Great Jehovah amid the terrible thunders on the Mount of Sinai. Would God, therefore, reveal a religion which He eventually intended to destroy? If He did, it would be an admission that He was the parent of imperfection, and that He could not communicate a religion to His people sufficiently exalted to last them forever.

But God, if He founded the Jewish religion (and all Christians admit that he did), anticipated the argument based upon the assertion that it was the divine will that the Faith of Judah should be supplanted by that of the followers of Christ. He effectually (so far as the Jews were concerned) guarded against change by commanding that those who desired another religion to the one they had should be put to death. In the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, it states that if a brother, or a son, or a daughter, or a wife of his bosom were to ask a son of Abraham to change his religion, the one that did it was to be stoned to death. "Thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shall stone him with stones that he die, &c." If the Jews were threatened with death if they worshipped any

other God than that of their fathers, why blame them for being afraid to worship the God of the Christians?

In spite of the evident polytheism of the early Jews, we must conclude that the acme of the Judaic Faith is the sublime doctrine of "The Oneness of God." "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord!" was the injunction to the chosen people. Couple this with the command, "Thou shalt have none other Gods but Me," and understand that the *me* refers to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob —the God, in fact, of Israel, Jehovah, or Yahveh, whose name Josephus tells us was too sacred to be pronounced; and where, then, is there any allowable possibility of the Christian Trinity? Before the doctrine of the Trinity could for a single moment be admitted, every one of these commands, and the very foundation of the old dispensation, including the Ten Commandments themselves, would have to be swept away. If the commands in the Old Testament are given by God, and are to be obeyed, the doctrines of Christianity are impossible!

Such is the position taken by the Jews. Against this it is urged that God never intended that the religion of Moses should be final, for by a long line of Hebrew prophets He foretold that He would send His Son into the World to be the founder of the only absolutely true Faith. Even so early as the "Fall," the prophesy had been made by manifold types and inspired utterances, and mankind had been thus promised a Redeemer, a Saviour, and a King. These

prophesies were fulfilled alike in the person and character of the humble Jesus of Nazareth.

Truly the Jews are a stiff-necked people, for they raise objections even to this argument. The learned among them aver that not a single so-called prophesy can be found in the Old Testament relating to Jesus Christ. Those prophesies which are quoted as fulfilled in the New Testament either are not to be found at all in the Old Testament, or they bear an entirely different interpretation to that which is given to them by the supposed Evangelists. The Jews insist upon literal fulfillment. It is not enough for them that we say that the spirit of prophesy is fulfilled. They want the prophesy carried to its bitter end, and fulfilled at every point. Especially do they protest against merely historical instances being quoted as prophesies. For instance, in Matthew we are told that Jesus remained in Egypt until the death of Herod—"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son.'" Now this supposed prophesy is to be found in the Eleventh Chapter of Hosea, and the First Verse: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." This is a simple historical statement, and has not the slightest appearance of prophesy, and could never by any possibility have been mistaken for such, had it not been for the quotation of it by Matthew. The Rabbis state, that the majority of those so-called prophesies, which are claimed as fulfilled by the establishment of Christianity, are of a similar character. They are purely

historical and local incidents related, in the past tense, as having already occurred at the time they were recorded. So confident are all the learned among the tribe of Israel that their Faith is the true one, that they challenge the Christian world to produce one single prophesy out of their sacred books which was literally fulfilled in all its points by Jesus of Nazareth, and by no other being! It would seem that on this point, also, the Jew has the better of the Christian.

There is another argument which Christianity has yet to urge. The mission of Christ was confirmed by the miracles which he wrought. In proof of his divine character, and of the sublimity and godliness of his teachings, he raised the dead, healed the sick, stilled the tempest, changed water into wine, and fed thousands of people with a quantity of food scarcely sufficient to make a decent meal for the twelve Apostles. He was transfigured on the mountain, rose with his body from the dead, and ascended visibly into Heaven. Could that Faith be false which was attested by so many, such stupendous, and such wonderful miracles?

"But," again interposes the exile from Canaan, "could our faith be false, supported and attested as it was by far greater miracles than ever were performed in evidence of Christianity?" And, damaging as it is to the belief of Christendom, such an assertion is well grounded. There is not a miracle wrought in favour of Christianity, of any importance, but what had previously been wrought in behalf of Judaism, and there were many astounding miracles wrought in support of the Faith of the Children of Israel, which cannot by

any means be equalled by the miracles of Christianity. "Jesus ascended to Heaven," says the Christian. "So also did Elijah," replies the Jew. "Jesus rose from the dead." "So also did the man who came in contact with the bones of Elisha, as he was being buried." "Jesus was three days in the bowels of the Earth." "Jonah was three days in the bowels of a fish." "Jesus was transfigured on the mountain." "So also was Moses, for as he descended from Mount Sinai 'he 'wist not that the skin of his face shone; and they were all afraid to come nigh him.'" "Jesus raised the widow's son at Nain." "Elisha restored to life the deceased son of the Shunamite." "Jesus fed five thousand on five loaves and two fishes." "Elisha prevented the widow's pot of oil from failing." "Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness." "Moses abode in the Mount forty days and forty nights, (and) neither did eat bread nor drink water." "Jesus cured the lepers of their disease." "Naaman was cured of leprosy by Elisha." "Jesus walked on the sea of Galilee." "If the Children of Israel did not walk on the Red Sea, they walked through it dry-shod whilst the waters stood like walls on the right hand, and on the left, which was, if anything, a more wonderful miracle." In these things the Gentiles were not at all original; and were it not that the clergy assure us to the contrary, we should be inclined to believe that the Christian miracles were copies of the Jewish and heathen ones.

Where in Christianity is a miracle equal to that performed by Joshua, of commanding the Sun and

Moon to stand still? Where can the miracles performed by Moses to astonish the Court of Pharaoh be equalled? The land covered with frogs, the dust turned into lice, and the rivers of Egypt changed into blood! Has Christianity a miracle more wonderful than the falling down of the walls of Jericho; the turning back of the Sun ten degrees to convince Hezikiah that he was not going to die of a boil; the killing of a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; the speech of Balaam's donkey; the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; the preservation of Noah, his family, and the animals for so long a time in the Ark; and the wonders that happened to Israel during their Exodus from Egypt? Thus, so far as miracles are concerned, the Jews have undoubtedly the best of it.

To one who has advanced beyond the superstitions of both Judaism and Christianity, the many conflicts between the two are fruitful of instruction. The astonishing phenomenon is most strikingly exhibited of a mind, full of absurd beliefs, being quite able to detect absurdity in the beliefs of others. I remember, a few months ago, having a long conversation with a Rabbi upon the subject of Christianity. He was keenly quick in detecting the absurdity of "Three Gods yet only one God," and of its being necessary for God to come on Earth to die to save sinners. He made quite merry over the devils in the pigs, and related the story of the cursing of the fig-tree with a decided smile of sarcasm. But when I ventured to allude to Samson having his strength in his hair, and tying

the foxes' tails together with a brand between them to burn the corn of the Philistines, as being equally ridiculous, he grew quite alarmed at my infidelity, and thought it was dangerous to throw doubts upon such subjects. It did not require the slightest argument to convince him of the absurdity of the miracle of turning water into wine; but no amount of argument could convince him that it was not one whit less possible or credible, than the producing of crystal streams of water by striking the barren rock with the rod of Moses! In short, he used his common sense when he looked at Christianity, but carefully laid it aside when he passed judgment upon his own creed. In like manner, too, the Christians act. They can see many absurdities in the Faith of Israel, and make merry at the superstition of the heathens; but they are totally blind to the superstitions which lie at the roots of their own creeds.

What is the cause of this? Because, on anybody else's religion than our own, we are free to judge and examine as we like, and the moment that we are left free to examine as our intellect and common sense may prompt, the absurd and foolish become conspicuous at once. In our own Faith we are restrained from examination through fear. We have been taught from infancy that such and such a story is sacred, and must not be doubted, under penalty of forfeiting the good-will of our heavenly Father. The result is, we *dare* not examine it. If we dare, and did, what absurdity there might be in it would become as glaring to us as to anybody else. So, because free-thinking upon all the articles of our beliefs is not

allowed, we go on from age to age repeating the childish nonsense of our barbarous and semi-barbarous ancestors. Our creeds become chains that moor the ship of civilization to the dark and benighted shores of a baneful ignorance. Allow us the liberty to think upon them, and we sever the cables, and our gallant barque bears us gloriously along over the everlasting waves of the Infinite Sea of Progress.

Once this liberty is really lost; once barriers are put in the way of the exercise of the intellect upon all subjects, and men, having no outlet to their hopes and energies, are plunged beneath the waves of a bleak despair. Life loses its cheering and joyous aspects, and sorrow and sadness are the customed lot of the unhappy multitudes. The business of existence seems that of misery, and the sky of humanity is left without a star! Men are driven to madness, and deeds of desperation fill the world with woe. Blinded by the dusts of Creed, man slays his brother man, and rivers of human blood cry up to heaven for vengeance! The pleasure of life seems death, and the labour of existence the wielding of the sword! The people are weighted with fetters, and the beautiful cities of the Earth are transformed into the dismal prison-houses of hopeless slaves. A globe of mental death, a mighty intellectual tomb, floats through the depths of space, with a face that is dark with shame, amid the sister planets of our system. It was the loss of intellectual liberty that goaded on the bigots who lit the Smithfield fires and fed the lurid flames with human blood. It was the slavery of thought that disgraced the name of humanity with

the barbarous Crusades, and which, by the agency of Holy wars, turned the fair fields of Europe and the plains of Palestine into festering sepulchres, clasping in one embrace the hordes of slaughtered dead. It was this that inspired the cruelty of the Spanish Inquisition, which burnt, in wretched heaps, unfortunate witches, and which put to torture and to death the noblest of the sons of men!

One thing more than all others has contributed to this loss of Religious Liberty, and that is unbounded faith in the Bible as an inspired and infallible book. By uplifting it into the sky of Faith, and fixing it in the Heavens of our conscience, all our actions have been coloured by its light. It is the very foundation of the Jewish Religion, therefore, which has been turned against the Jews themselves. They have clung to the Old Testament, which has furnished the warrants for their own deaths. Had it not been for the horrible commands, massacres, and murders detailed within the pages of the Judaic Books of the Law and the Prophets, the Christians could nowhere else have found a justification for the treatment to which they have constantly subjected the unfortunate believers in Moses. Faith in the Old Testament meant the Death of all Religious Liberty and Freedom of Thought. Had not Moses called upon the Faithful in Israel to "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out, from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour," because a number had been guilty of worshipping a calf which his own

brother, Aaron, had made? Three thousand, we are told, fell, at the instance of this command from Moses, to avenge his God upon the idolators who offered their worship to the calf of Aaron. Had not Elijah slain four hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal with his own hand? Indeed the Christian saw that the Old Testament was filled with denunciations and punishments of the idolaters and the unfaithful. In the days when the chosen ones were under the direct and special Government of God, whole nations had been exterminated, long and bloody wars had been waged, and horrible massacres perpetrated for the express purpose of preserving unwavering Faith in the laws of Moses and the utterances of inspired Prophets. God himself had not unfrequently assisted his people in their bloody work. He had caused earthquakes to swallow, floods to drown, hail-stones to demolish, fire and brimstone to consume, plagues to destroy, hornets to afflict, serpents to poison, and avenging angels to slay those who in any way rebelled against his cruel rule, or worshipped other Gods. The Christians, with morbid minds dwelling upon these Old Testament accounts, placed the Jews in the same category as the children of Baal, or the worshippers of Moloch, and, with the sanction of divine authority and example, they fell upon the helpless descendants of the authors of those awful deeds, the blackest and bloodiest of all that have survived to civilised times. Had the ancestors of the Jews failed to leave on record the details of their wars of extermination, and their unmerciful treatment of the heretics to their faith, I assert again

it would have been impossible for the Christians to have drawn, from any other existing source, either sanction or encouragement for the spirit and the crimes which, committed in the cause of Religion, have disgraced the name of Humanity, steeped her hands in blood, and lain her, drunk with superstition, into the mire and mud of degradation and shame.

Though the Jews have not been devoid of this same narrow spirit, which is the chief enemy of all happiness and all advancement, even in modern times, it must be said, to their credit, that, during the darkest part of the night of Christian Faith, they were among the principal guardians of the light of science and the chief defenders of human knowledge. They pursued their studies in natural science when it was criminal to do so, and they were the Physicians of Europe when Superstition sought to effect a cure for the ills of the human frame by paying mad devotion at some saint-befriended shrine. The name of Ben Ezra, Maimonides, Ben Isaac, Haroun and Jehuda,—poets, astronomers, commentators, writers, and physicians—will live in the memories of men so long as devotion to truth, achievements of the intellect, and the efforts of genius can command the sympathy and applause, the honour and esteem, which they ever do command among the intellectual of mankind. These men, and others of their kind and race, followed the golden thread which the Ariadne of Science held lovingly for their guidance out of the mazes of Ignorance and the gloom of Mediæval Superstitions. Had it not been for them, dark as these times were, they would still

have been darker, and the reign of Ignorance would have been devoid of those rays of light which, like the beacon lights to the mariner, were our only safeguards against the entire wreckage of human thought.

And what was their reward for all this? They were hunted to the death. Banished from one country after another, they were often distressed wanderers upon the Earth, without a single land of refuge. When, in 1306, they were expelled from Montpellier, then the old men, with feeble forms worn out in the service of France and the adornment of their age, died heartbroken by the way-side; and men, women, and children, whose only crime had been the worship of one God, foot-sore and weary, upon the lonely roads of France, rested them at night, shelterless from the storms, and unhoused from the bitter winds that mocked at their cheerless fate. Laws were passed compelling them to wear such dresses as would at once proclaim their faith and nation, and they were forbidden all intercourse with Christian subjects. Everything was done to strengthen the fanaticism of bigots, and to deepen the hatred of the ignorant populace. When, previous to the fourteenth century, a Jew was executed, even in his death the bitterness of hate did follow him, and consequently he was crucified with his head downwards between two dogs. He who, touched by the mystic wand of love, had bestowed his affections upon some Jewish Maid and had made her the mistress of his heart, was to be put to death. When they were expelled from Spain they offered 30,000 ducats to the Queen to remain. For some time Isabella hesitated,

and perhaps she would have granted them their wish, but for the relentless ferocity of the Fanatic Torquemada. With a crucifix in his hand he stood upon the threshold of the Royal Palace, and, confronting the Queen, exclaimed: "Judas sold his God for thirty pieces of silver; you are about to sell him for thirty thousand!" Under such bigotry it was impossible for the Jews to remain, and consequently they were expelled, after suffering untold tortures, from the realms of this bigoted Queen. In 1390 a blood-thirsty fanatic, by the name of Hernando Martinez, devoted himself vigorously to preaching that a Jew ought not to be permitted to live, and the ignorant populace, aroused by his evil eloquence, fell upon the Jewish quarter at Seville, and butchered four thousand of these oppressed people, whilst Martinez himself directed and assisted at the dreadful massacre. At Cordova and at Burgos, at Barcelona, and Toledo, and at other fair cities of Spain, the Christian sword shed Jewish blood, and the zeal of the followers of Christ was exhibited in the murdering of his contrymen.

Banished from Spain, the King of Portugal promised them protection. Some eighty thousand Jews, placing confidence in the word of a Christian, took refuge in his dominions. They had occasion to bitterly repent it. The ecclesiastics of Spain organised a mission, and fired the clergy of Portugal with the wildest hate. Heart-rending scenes of persecution took place everywhere. At last the King issued an edict that the Jews should, within a certain time, be out of his kingdom, with the exception of the

children under fourteen years of age, and these were to be kept and educated as Christians. Then, O! Christian Mother, think what the Jewess of Portugal felt, when her child was torn from her bosom of love, to be placed in the hands of her bitterest enemies! Those she had borne of her womb, and nursed at her breast, she was to see no more. Of her dearest treasures in life she was robbed, and it were better that her life itself had been required. The land was full of moaning and sorrow, and bitter cries of the anguish of parents burdened the pitiless Christian ears. Driven to positive madness, mothers took their own offspring and tore them limb from limb, or hurled them from them into the depths of wells, rather than yield them to the protection of their foes. God grant that the priests may never have the upper hand again, lest such scenes of woe be once more repeated!

It was thus that the Jews suffered for their faith and died as martyrs, because they only worshipped one God! And let it not be supposed that all has been related. I have said nothing of the persecution to which they were subjected in England, and the rest of the countries of Europe. I have said nothing of the multitudes that were slain as a "preliminary exercise" in France prior to the mobs of Europe marching to Palestine on the Crusades against Mahommedans. I have said nothing of numbers of Jews being burned at every Royal marriage in Spain, just by way of sport to the Royal couple. But I have said enough, I think, to show that the proposed religion of "Peace," and the worshippers of the "God of love,"

were very far indeed from forgiving their enemies, or from exhibiting that charity which is accounted the greatest of the Christian virtues!

It is lamentable that in our days some of the ancient spirit still lingers in the ecclesiastical ranks, and that even in Germany, a country of the profoundest learning and philosophy, it should have prompted the priests to renew the ancient animosities, to open the old wounds, and to propose a re-enaction of those scenes which were even a disgrace to the dark ages. The recent events which have occurred in Russia are still more lámentable and disgraceful, for violence, similar to that of the dark ages, has been resorted to.

But, thanks to the achievements of Science, the progress of the human intellect, and the advancement of civilization, the priests are losing their power. Never again can they use their influence to that extent that the liberty of man will be entirely destroyed, and the intellect of the human race led captive in fetters. Reason has ascended the throne of the present age, and she sways the sceptre of everlasting progress. We are beginning now to look at the merits of *man*, and not the profession of creed. Man! Man! This is the highest title we can have, and be he Jew or be he Gentile, if he be a good, true, and noble *man*, he is worthy of our esteem and deserving of our fraternal love.

There is still, however, work to do. The growth of Scepticism has diminished Fanaticism, and we owe our liberties to the dauntless labours, and too often

cruel deaths, of brave infidels. But whilst the priests have power at all, that is to say so long as they assume false merits, and seek protection from criticism behind a cowardly sanctity,—so long as they class themselves as specially the servants of Providence, and forbid us to touch their holy garments lest our profanity may spoil them, we must work. Our liberties are in danger just to that extent that they claim and use an immunity for their class which is not granted to any other. To the extent of their real power, as priests, will be the evil they inflict upon our present age and its successors. As men, we say nothing against them, providing they will permit us to criticise them as men. It is to make them more "the man," and less "the priest," that we are working to-day. We say to them —Take off the sacerdotal robes and stand up and instruct us as man to man, and our indignation shall cease; but, whilst you protect yourselves and inflict injury on others in performance of your functions as *Priests,* we shall place ourselves on the side of humanity to protect, as far as we are able, its sacred rights, and we will not rest until we have done all in our power to banish your influence from the Earth.